

COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

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Administration

- Rick Davis, Dean
- Julie Thompson, Executive Director, Center for the Arts
- Kristin Johnson-Neshati, Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs
- Lauren Wagner, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs
- Justin Sutters, Assistant Dean for Research and Assessment

College Code: AR

The mission of the College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) is to advance the study, creation, performance, exhibition, and management of the arts, acting on the strong belief in their transformative influence on individuals and civilizations. Fusing the academic and the professional, the campus and the community, the past and the present, CVPA seeks to engage new art forms, populations, and ways of working to meet the needs of a changing world both inside and beyond the walls of the university. The College strives to ensure that Mason's entire student population has the opportunity to experience and study the arts as a key component of a well-rounded liberal education.

Studying the arts goes hand in hand with creation, performance, and management. Each major features strong academic preparation in the history and theory of the art form in support of discipline-based technique courses. The college's faculty of practicing artist-teachers-managers works closely with students in a variety of curricular and co-curricular creative projects. Once basic techniques are established, students are encouraged to stretch, grow, and experiment within this supportive environment, enhancing their experience as working artists and arts managers while enriching the cultural life of the campus community.

An education in the arts is deepened by regular contact with the work of distinguished visiting artists. The college is home to the Center for the Arts (<http://cfa.gmu.edu/>) on the Fairfax campus and the Hylton Performing Arts Center (<https://hyltoncenter.org/>) on the Science and Technology campus, both of which present diverse programs of cultural experiences for the entire university community, as well as Northern Virginia and the greater Washington, D.C., area. Artists from across the country and around the world regularly perform, give master classes, work with students during extended residencies, and interact with the community in a variety of other ways. The accessibility and vitality of the Concert Hall, Hylton Center, TheaterSpace, the Gillespie Gallery of Art, Johnson Center Cinema, Harris Theater, and other campus and regional venues provide an unparalleled educational experience in the arts.

Requirements & Policies

General Academic Policies

The requirements for each academic program offered by the college are described in the sections below. Students are ultimately responsible for their academic progress towards their degrees. All students are subject to the university's general academic policies in addition to those specific to each academic unit.

Accommodations for Disabled Students

Students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (<http://ods.gmu.edu>) (Student Union Building I, Room 222; 703-993-2474) to open a file and learn more about accommodations that may be available to them.

Auditing

Auditing a class requires admission to the university first, and students wishing to audit a course must obtain written permission from the instructor **before registering** for the class. Students do not receive grades or credit for audited courses. A student who audits a course does so for the purposes of self-enrichment and academic exploration and is not required to actively participate in class assignments, presentations, or exams. The course is offered **only** on a space-available basis with the approval of the instructor. It is expected that auditing students will respect all class rules and practices.

The Course Audit Form can be found on the Registrar's website (<http://registrar.gmu.edu>). The form must be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar by the last day to drop the course.

Note: A previously audited course may be taken again for credit in a later term. Students may also audit a course previously taken and passed; however, students may not change from credit to audit status nor from audit to credit status after the end of the drop period, as defined above. The usual tuition and fees apply to audit status.

Auditing Courses under the Senior Citizen Waiver Program

Under terms of the Senior Citizen Higher Education Act of 1974, eligible Virginia residents (requires legal domicile for one year) that are 60 years of age or older are entitled to enroll to audit (no academic credit received) up to three academic credit courses per semester and pay no tuition or fees, except fees established for the purpose of paying for course materials or laboratory fees.

For more information on policies and procedures, please refer to the Registrar's website (<https://registrar.gmu.edu/topics/senior-citizen-waiver/>).

E-mail

George Mason University uses only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students should activate their Mason e-mail, use it to communicate with their school, department or program and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important information.

Registration

Students are personally responsible for correctly registering for courses and paying all tuition and fees by the official university registration and

payment deadlines. All students should verify the accuracy of their enrollment before the end of the add and drop periods.

Questions about Academic Policies

Students with questions regarding exceptions to academic policies should contact their academic advisor first. They may also contact the CVPA Student Academic Affairs Office (College Hall, C209; acadaff@gmu.edu or 703-993-2196).

Undergraduate Policies and Information

Academic Course Load

Undergraduate students earning degrees in CVPA may register for up to 18 credits per fall and spring semester without the dean's permission. Students are advised that they will be required to pay additional tuition beyond the 15-credit, university full-time academic load. Students should be cognizant of the time commitment when they register for their courses, especially if they register for high numbers of credits. Students are urged to consult with their academic advisor regularly and to familiarize themselves with Mason guidelines for work and academic load. Students are reminded that employment must not take priority over coursework.

Advising

Students are assigned academic advisors by major and are strongly encouraged to meet with them at least once per semester, and particularly when they achieve 75 credits or are two semesters before expected graduation. Undergraduate students in academic difficulty (cumulative GPA under 2.00) are **required** to see an advisor prior to registration for the semester following registration restriction. See more information on advising for the college here: <https://cvpa.gmu.edu/current-students/undergraduate-student-resources> (<https://cvpa.gmu.edu/current-students/undergraduate-student-resources/>)

Cumulative GPA in Major

Undergraduate students earning CVPA degrees must earn a minimum 2.00 cumulative GPA in their major, or higher if required by their program.

Degree Programs

The undergraduate degree consists of coursework in the Mason Core (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>), a major area of study, and electives. To earn a bachelor's degree, students must complete a minimum of 120 credits, of which at least 45 must be upper level courses (numbered 300 and above). At least one course at the 300 or 400 level must be designated "writing intensive."

Foreign Language Requirement

The BA degrees within CVPA require intermediate-level proficiency in one foreign language or the completion of a minor, double major or double degree. The foreign language requirement may be fulfilled by completing a course in a foreign language numbered 202, 209, or 210 (or higher level courses taught in the language) or achieving a satisfactory score on an approved proficiency test. International students should consult the Modern and Classical Languages department's website (<https://mcl.gmu.edu/language-testing-and-waivers/new-foreign-language-testing/>) about a possible waiver of this requirement.

Leave of Absence

All undergraduate students who are planning an absence from George Mason must complete a formal request for a Leave of Absence with

their academic advisor and the CVPA Student Academic Affairs office through a workflow process linked from the Registrar's website (<https://registrar.gmu.edu/forms/ellucian-workflow-resources/>). Students do not need to request a Leave of Absence if they are participating in a George Mason University sponsored study abroad program or have received permission to study elsewhere. The maximum time allowed for a Leave of Absence is four semesters. A new application for admission to the university will be required if a student is away for more than 2 academic years OR a Leave of Absence request was not submitted. Re-admission to the university is not guaranteed. See AP.1.8 Undergraduate Leave of Absence (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/registration-attendance/#ap-1-8>) for full university policy.

Mason Core Program

The baccalaureate degree requires students to take a range of courses that provide a broad knowledge of the world, develop the ability to think both conceptually and critically, acquaint them with many different methods of inquiry, and provide the skills to continue intellectual growth throughout their lives. Students select from a range of courses outlined in the Mason Core (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>) section. Students accepted into the Honors College (<https://honorscollege.gmu.edu/why-honors/academics/>) fulfill some/all of their Mason Core requirements through completion of that program of study. Students are strongly advised to consult the University Mason Core (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/>) page.

Minors

The BA degrees within CVPA require declaration of a minor, intermediate-level proficiency in one foreign language, or declaration of a double major or double degree. All students considering a minor should consult with an academic advisor first. University policy states that as part of their minor, students must earn 8 distinct credits that are not used to fulfill requirements for their major. Some programs may have more specific criteria for applying credits to a minor.

Prerequisites

Undergraduate students must earn a C or better in prerequisite courses to proceed to the next course.

RECR courses

Any 100-level RECR courses offered by the College of Education and Human Development which incorporate dance cannot be counted toward required credits for a degree in CVPA. Students may take non-dance RECR courses for elective credit for CVPA degrees.

Return from Suspension

Students placed on suspension by the Office of the University Registrar have a registration hold placed on their record that prevents enrollment in future coursework. Upon return from the suspension period, the student must have an Academic Advisor Approval form reviewed by their academic advisor and signed. After the form has been completed, it must be submitted to the CVPA Student Academic Affairs Office for final approval. Upon receipt of the form by the CVPA Student Academic Affairs Office, students will be advised about an additional requirement of completion of a Learning Services workshop or a meeting with an academic coach. Upon completion of that workshop or requirement, the hold will be removed.

Study Elsewhere

Students with fewer than 60 hours of transfer coursework (not including registration through the Consortium of Universities of the Washington

Metropolitan Area or coursework completed through the Global Education Office - <https://studyabroad.gmu.edu>) may take up to 12 hours of coursework in CVPA disciplines at another institution. A student may seek permission for additional hours beyond these limits for summer registration if his/her permanent residence is more than 50 miles from the George Mason University Fairfax campus. Students must obtain advance, written approval from the student's dean and the course dean's office. Students who enroll elsewhere without advance written permission while enrolled at Mason will not receive transfer credit for the coursework taken at another institution unless they re-apply for admission to Mason at a later date as transfer applicants and meet all priority deadlines. Re-admission is not guaranteed, and transfer credit is awarded based upon course equivalences in effect at the time of re-admission. **First-time freshmen and transfer students in their first semester at Mason are not permitted to study elsewhere.** Courses previously attempted at Mason (including withdrawals) cannot be taken elsewhere. Schools and Colleges have study elsewhere criteria for courses in their disciplines in addition to University policy. Students must be in good standing with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 in their Mason courses. See AP.1.4.2 Permission to Study Elsewhere (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/registration-attendance/#ap-1-4-2>) for additional information.

Termination from Arts Undeclared

Arts Undeclared is not a degree-granting major and is only intended to be a **temporary** track for certain incoming students to Mason. The expectation is that a portfolio will be submitted or an audition completed **within 1-2 semesters of Mason enrollment**, depending on the intended major of the student. Failure to determine a degree-granting major, failure to complete the audition/portfolio step, and/or failure to achieve a successful audition or portfolio result within the first two semesters of enrollment will result in a mandatory **change of program to Exploratory**, to allow the student more time to determine what major path they would prefer to follow.

Transfer of Credit

Transfer students must resolve transfer credit issues within their first academic year of enrollment.

Undergraduate students may transfer a maximum of 18 credits earned in non-degree status at Mason.

Withdrawals

Students are responsible for all courses in which they remain officially enrolled once the drop period has ended.

Undergraduates enrolled in degree programs are eligible to withdraw from three classes through the ninth week (of a fifteen-week semester) without dean's approval and at the student's own discretion during their entire undergraduate career at Mason. See AP.1.5.1 Selective Withdrawal (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/registration-attendance/#ap-1-5-1>) for Undergraduates for further details.

Instructors do not have the authority to withdraw students from classes. Withdrawals other than Selective Withdrawals require the approval of the academic dean. Withdrawals are typically allowed only for full semesters at a time (all enrolled courses) and are only permitted for non-academic reasons. No withdrawals can be approved to avoid an unsatisfactory grade. When submitting a withdrawal request, students must provide original, verifiable, third-party documentation for the reason for the withdrawal. Requests for withdrawals should be submitted as early in the semester as possible, and never after the last day of classes.

Graduate Policies and Information

For items not listed below, please refer to the university's policies: AP.6 Graduate Policies (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/>).

CVPA's graduate programs offer highly-focused study, designed to prepare students for professional work in the arts and education.

Admissions

Graduate applicants to all CVPA programs must meet the admission standards and application requirements for graduate study as outlined on the Graduate Admissions Policy (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-policies/>) page. The specific admissions requirements for each graduate degree can be found on the CVPA Graduate Admissions Requirements website (<https://cvpa.gmu.edu/admissions/graduate-admissions/graduate-admission-requirements/>).

All admission decisions are posted to the applicant's application portal. Applicants will be notified when the decision is posted to their portal via email to the address they provided at the point of application. No decisions are given over the phone or in person.

The College of Visual and Performing Arts does not offer an appeal process for admissions decisions.

Transfer of Credit

Graduate credit earned prior to admission to a certificate or master's program may be eligible to be transferred into Mason and applied to the certificate or degree. Please see full details under AP.6.5 Credit by Exam or Transfer (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-5>).

Appeals Process

Appeals of Academic Procedures

See Appeals of Academic Procedures (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/student-rights-responsibilities/>) for University Policies.

CVPA Procedures for Grade Appeal

Although faculty members are generally the best judges of student performance in their classes, circumstances may cause a student to believe that a professor has made an unfair grade decision. Therefore, a Grade Appeal process has been established to ensure a fair hearing in such cases. Grade appeals are not accepted after the last day of classes for the following semester, as indicated in the Schedule of Classes (spring for fall grades, fall for spring and summer grades). The process for initiating and resolving a Grade Appeal is as follows:

1. The first step to resolve differences between an instructor and student concerning a grade should be a discussion with the instructor. This meeting should occur within two weeks of the student's written request for a meeting. If the instructor is no longer affiliated with the University, the appeal is made to the Program Director.
2. If the instructor and student cannot resolve the issue, and if the student wishes to pursue the matter further, the student must present to the Program Director a written appeal including the following:
 - a. A description of the outcome of the informal discussion process.
 - b. Any relevant documents the student would like to have reviewed as part of the appeal process.
 - c. A copy of the course syllabus and assignment descriptions

Failing a satisfactory resolution, the student may appeal the grade by submitting a written appeal to the CVPA Student Academic Affairs Office, either by an email to the Assistant Dean or through the academic complaint link (https://gmu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9M5ATqenlhAnRhc/) on the CVPA website. The decision of the Assistant Dean for Student Academic Affairs is final.

CVPA Procedure for Non-Academic Appeals or Grievance

A student who intends to file a non-academic appeal, or intends to file a grievance against a faculty member, another student, or administrator may utilize the resources of the College's complaint form (https://gmu.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9M5ATqenlhAnRhc/), the University's Student Complaints page (<https://complaints.gmu.edu>) and/or may undertake the following steps when appropriate:

1. The student meets with the professor and Program Director to discuss the non-academic appeal/grievance; this meeting should occur within two weeks of the student's written request for a meeting; if the person is no longer affiliated with the University, the request is made to the Department or Program Director only.
2. The professor (Program Director) responds to the student within three days of the meeting.
3. If the student wishes to continue the non-academic appeal/grievance, the student must submit a written explanation to the CVPA Student Academic Affairs Office. The Assistant Dean for Student Academic Affairs reviews all non-academic appeals and grievances and have the final decision for the college. Bias and discrimination complaints (<https://cvpa.gmu.edu/about/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/harm-response-options/>) are handled in collaboration with the CVPA Office of Belonging and Inclusive Engagement as well as George Mason's Office of Access, Compliance and Community.
4. The student may follow additional University appeal procedures outlined in Appeals of Academic Procedures (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/student-rights-responsibilities/>).

Academic Termination from a Graduate Program

CVPA follows university policy on academic termination (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/graduate-policies/#ap-6-6-2>), and all CVPA graduate students should familiarize themselves with that policy.

Students are first notified by the Office of the University Registrar if they are in danger of termination. If a notified student wishes to request an exception to termination, the Graduate Termination Appeal Form (<https://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/GTA.pdf>) must be submitted to the student's program advisor within five business days of receipt of the termination notification. If the form is approved by the advisor, it must be submitted to the CVPA Student Academic Affairs Office for further review. If approved by the CVPA Assistant Dean for Student Academic Affairs, the request also requires approval by the Associate Provost for Graduate Education (APGE). The Student Academic Affairs Office will send approved requests and documentation to APGE for further review. Further information about Graduate Academic Exceptions can be found here (<https://graduate.gmu.edu/studying-here/graduate-policy-resources/graduate-academic-exceptions/>).

- Film and Video Studies Program
- Reva and Sid Dewberry Family School of Music
- School of Art
- School of Dance
- School of Theater

Programs

- Visual and Performing Arts, MFA

Academic Units

- Arts Management Program
- Computer Game Design Program